

VZCZCXRO5193  
PP RUEHAG RUEHROV  
DE RUEHDL #0306/01 1491635  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 281635Z MAY 08  
FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9209  
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUBLIN 000306

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/28/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [EAIR](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [PARM](#) [NATO](#)  
ETRD, KPAO, UNKIK, ESDP, EUN, NO, EI  
SUBJECT: FOREIGN AFFAIRS TOUR D'HORIZON WITH IRISH MINISTER  
OF DEFENSE

REF: A. DUBLIN 282  
[B](#). 07 DUBLIN 919

Classified By: Ambassador Thomas C. Foley; Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

-----  
Summary  
-----

[1](#)1. (C) Ambassador, Defense Attache, and POLOFF met with Irish Minister for Defense Willie O'Dea on May 28, 2008. O'Dea voiced unqualified support for a proposed immigration, customs, and agriculture full aviation pre-clearance agreement between Ireland and the U.S., saying that the Irish Government was anxious to sign the agreement as soon as possible. O'Dea described the pro-Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign as going well, predicting that the referendum would pass "comfortably." He was non-committal about the outcome of the ongoing cluster munitions conference. O'Dea described the situation for Irish ESDP peacekeeping troops in Chad as "stable so far but could get volatile," and predicted that ESDP troops would need to remain in Chad far longer than the scheduled end of the mission on March 15, 2009. Similarly, he said there have been fewer problems than expected for the Irish-led KFOR mission in Kosovo since Kosovo's declaration of independence, but he worried about what will happen on June 15 when Kosovo's constitution comes into effect and the UN hands over power to the Government of Kosovo and EU-led police and supervisory missions. End summary.

-----  
Aviation Pre-Clearance Agreement  
-----

[1](#)2. (C) O'Dea's prime interest in meeting with the Ambassador was to promote the signing of a full immigration, customs, and agriculture pre-clearance agreement between the U.S. and Ireland (Ref B) for commercial and general aviation at Shannon and Dublin Airports. (Note: O'Dea's Limerick constituency lies adjacent to Shannon Airport. The heart of his constituency, the city of Limerick, benefits from employment generated by the airport. End note.)

[1](#)3. (C) O'Dea voiced enthusiastic and unqualified support for the proposed pre-clearance agreement, saying that the Irish Government was firmly committed to finalizing the accord. He noted that the agreement would bring new business and employment to the Limerick region. He stated that he had already signed off on plans for infrastructural developments required to establish a full pre-clearance operation at Shannon Airport and said that once the agreement was signed, construction would begin. He went on to say that the agreement would need to be ratified by the Parliament (Dail), predicting that this would be accomplished by the end of the year.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: Once the Government decides to sign the agreement, it will be able to push the required legislation through the Parliament since it holds the majority of

Parliamentary seats. The Irish -- and not just O'Dea -- are clearly excited about the prospect of an economic boost to the western region of Ireland and are prepared to go to considerable lengths to see a pre-clearance facility become a reality there. Meanwhile, a team of DHS officials is in Dublin this week to further negotiate the terms of the agreement. End comment.)

-----  
Cluster Munitions  
-----

15. (C) In response to the Ambassador's question about the ongoing cluster munitions conference in Dublin, O'Dea was noncommittal about what he expected the outcome to be, saying that the Government's 2007 "Programme for Action" called for the banning of cluster munitions. Nonetheless, he pointed out language in the "Programme" that would enable Ireland to negotiate with users of cluster munitions like the U.S. if the conference did not produce a binding convention.

-----  
Chad  
-----

16. (C) O'Dea described the situation in Chad, where Irish troops are serving in an Irish-led EU mission, as "stable so far but could get volatile." Stating that the rebels seem to have little appetite for engaging properly configured army troops, he described an incident where Irish troops ran into a rebel group while on patrol. The two sides sat down to talk and the rebels acknowledged the legitimacy of the Irish

DUBLIN 00000306 002 OF 002

troops' mission to protect civilians in camps and villages. O'Dea said that a lot of work is being done on the ground to explain the EU's humanitarian mission. Nonetheless, O'Dea worried about the extended supply lines in landlocked Eastern Chad. He also said he expected that EU and Irish troops would be in Chad far longer than March 15, 2009, the scheduled date for the end of the EU mission. Predicting that the UN would not be able to mount an effective peacekeeping operation to Chad by that time, he said that the Irish troops wouldn't simply abandon the people and leave a vacuum -- undoing their good work -- if the EU mission could not hand off effectively to the UN on March 15.

-----  
Kosovo  
-----

17. (C) In reviewing the situation in Kosovo, where Ireland is the KFOR framework nation and currently contributes about 280 troops, O'Dea said that Kosovo's declaration of independence had not created as many problems on the ground as had been initially feared. Nonetheless, he appeared worried about what will happen on June 15 when Kosovo's constitution comes into effect and the UN hands over power to the Government of Kosovo and the new EU-led police and supervisory missions. He mused that the hand-over would be complicated by widespread lawlessness and corruption, which would require army troops on a continuing basis to enable the police to take control.

-----  
Shannon Airport  
-----

18. (C) The Ambassador thanked O'Dea for the Government's stalwart commitment to allow U.S. military flights to transit Shannon Airport during travel to and from Iraq and Afghanistan. (Note: The policy is controversial to those who oppose the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and those who allege that Shannon Airport has been used for terrorism rendition flights. End note.) Clearly pleased by the recognition of his role in this Government policy, O'Dea said that the Irish

Government was glad to help.  
FOLEY